

Alba Literaria is the first history of Scottish literature planned and produced outside Scotland. It is made of 48 essays written on single authors or single aspects of the Scottish literary production, and it is focused on topics spanning from medieval times to some of the latest writers working nowadays in the country (or, partly, outside it). Each contribution to the volume deals with particular aspects of those works or writers, so as to analyze the fracture zones where the Canon and its linearity is questioned or subversed, illustrating some of the core problems attached to a 'minor' and 'colonised' country, such as: the loss of national identity, the schizophrenic contradictions linked to its multi-linguistic reality, the psychic and cultural anxiety determined by its 'marginalization', the tragedy of the Scottish Clearances and Diaspora, the contaminations and the divergences between the English and the Scottish canons, the role played, through various centuries, by translation, and the too often suppressed worlds of oral production and women literature respectively. Discussing, in various ways and through different approaches, the different strategies through which a sense of cultural identity is created by counter-exercising power and self-constitution, Alba Literaria is not only concerned with the many 'englishes' born in Scotland before and after the collapse of the British Empire, but with the more general collision of the many facets of Otherness those languages have brought into play in a near and distant past. To look at Scotland in terms of a counter-discursive theory means not only to place the country within the general discussion about the marginalization of the peripheral literatures written in the English language, but to reject the organic wholeness of the imperial discourse for the re-constitution of a national identity, observing how the Empire has been condemned to collapse because of the introduction of a large number of new and subversive voices within its system.